Section 15 adjective (relative) clauses

pages 208–209

language notes

In some languages which have relative clauses, these may contain 'resumptive pronouns' which repeat the meaning of the relative pronoun. This can lead to mistakes even at advanced level:

**They made me an offer which I decided to reject it.*

Some other elementary points, revised here, may still cause occasional problems at this level. For example, some students may still have difficulty in producing and reading sentences in which object pronouns are dropped. See pages 270–272 for further work on this.

possible further activities

Personalisation: dropping 'that' Get students to write sentences beginning as follows:

A man/woman/girl/boy I know …
A man/woman/girl/boy I met once …
A boy/girl I went to school with …

Internet Ask them to look for interesting sentences on the internet beginning in the same way.

Guessing identity Tell students to think of somebody in the class and say something about him/her, beginning 'The person I'm thinking of' (without giving the person's name). The others have to decide who is meant. Like this:

'The person I'm thinking of comes from Brasilia and likes dancing.' 'Jo.'

Vocabulary expansion: dropping 'that' Teach some useful nouns, and get students to write definitions beginning 'A thing you …', 'Something you …', or 'Things you …' and ending in prepositions (help with vocabulary as necessary). Like this:

'a lawnmower' – 'a thing you cut grass with'
'skeleton keys' – 'things burglars open doors with'

Paraphrase Tell students that they are having a conversation with English-speaking friends, but they keep forgetting words. How can they use relative clauses to make themselves clear? Give them some simple words to paraphrase. They can practise dropping *that* at the same time. Like this:

'cup' – 'something you drink out of'

They won't always have to use the preposition-final structure, but it will often be needed. Relative *where* will also be useful:

'kitchen' – 'a place where you cook / a room you cook in'

Vocabulary expansion: 'what' Teach or revise some useful nouns, along with simple definitions like the following:

Perfume is what makes you smell nice.
Paint is what you put on walls to make them beautiful.
Glue is what sticks things together.
Enamel is what you have on your teeth.
Fertiliser is what makes things grow.
A saucepan is what you use to cook things like soup.
A kettle is what you use to boil water.
Exercise is what makes you healthy and tired.
A torch is what you use to see when it's dark.
Propaganda is what makes people believe lies.
A lid is what you put on a saucepan.

An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form or use.

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Then: 1. Give students the definitions and see if they can remember the nouns. 2. Give them the nouns and see if they can remember the definitions.

Do people tell the truth? Ask students to complete one or more of the following sentences:

What people say is usually … what they think.
What politicians say is usually … what they think.
What small children say is usually … what they think.
What I say is usually … what I think.

Help with suitable modifying expressions if necessary ('very different from', 'a bit different from', 'the opposite of', 'not at all' …).

Internet check: 'everything that/which/what' Get students to check on the internet to see which of the following are most and least frequent (as continuous expressions):

"everything that" "everything which" "everything what"

page 210

language notes

The grammar of relative clauses depends partly on whether the clause is 'identifying' or 'non-identifying' (also called 'defining/non-defining' or 'restrictive/non-restrictive'). The 'identifying' type, common in speech and informal writing, may still need some attention at this level. However, students who wish to develop a good command of formal written English (including native speakers) will also need to pay careful attention to the way non-identifying clauses are structured.

The distinction between the two types is revised here; for more about the grammar of the two kinds of clauses, see pages 211–215.

Punctuation: note that in some languages (e.g. German), both types of relative clause tend to be 'fenced off' from the rest of the sentence by commas; in English this only happens with non-identifying clauses.

**The people, who caused the riots, included a number of unemployed youths.*

possible further activities

Building sentences with identifying clauses; dropping 'that' Write the separate parts of the sentences below (or other sentences with a similar structure) on cards. Give out the cards; students then have to go round trying to join up with the two others whose sentence-parts go with theirs. You can make it more challenging if you wish by not using capital letters or full stops.

The woman | our dog bit | is still in hospital.
The house | my parents bought 20 years ago | is worth ten times what they paid for it.
Some students | my brother knows | are in trouble with the police.
A painting | my neighbour found hanging in his attic | has been sold for £50,000.
Some boxes | a dustman found standing open in the street | contained secret documents.
Not all of the things | John was taught at school | were useful to him in later life.
Places | people revisit years later | often turn out to be disappointing.

Building sentences with non-identifying clauses Make up sentences about people who are likely to be well known to the students, with the same structure as the ones below. Proceed as in the above exercise; make sure the separate parts include the punctuation.

Princess Diana, | who married Prince Charles, | died in a car crash.
Barack Obama, | who was elected in 2008, | was the first black President of the USA.

Personalisation Ask students to complete some or all of the following sentences, paying careful attention to punctuation.

The person who has influenced me most in my life is …
A person I really admire is …

An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form or use.

➔ Section 15 continues

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People who …… really get on my nerves.
My friend [Name], who ……, is really good at …
[Name], who was …, did our country a great deal of good/harm.

Internet Ask students to find one or more interesting sentences on the internet beginning as follows:
"The Prime Minster, who"
"The Prime Minister who"
"Edinburgh Castle, which"
Are commas used (or not used) mostly as taught here?

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language notes

Students may not need a productive knowledge of this kind of identifying structure unless they need to write in a relatively formal style. However, if they are not familiar with it, it may cause comprehension difficulty (see page 272).

possible further activities

Personalisation Ask students to complete some or all of the following sentences:
I can't eat dishes made with …
I like/don't like … made of …
I like … made of … more than … made of ….
… made today are not as good as … made … ago.
… made today are much better than … made … ago.
… sold in this country are much cheaper / more expensive than … sold in …
The useful/useless subjects taught at my school include(d) …

Building sentences Write the separate parts of the sentences below (or other sentences with a similar structure) on cards, and proceed as in the 'building sentences' activities suggested for page 210.
The tiger | seen wandering in the park | had escaped from the city zoo.
A diamond necklace | found on a table in a burger bar | had been stolen from a local jeweller's.
82 % of the children | questioned | said they did not believe in Father Christmas.
Police | called to a wedding party | found a fight in progress.
Most of the people | asked for their opinions | had nothing to say.
The two children | kidnapped in Berlin last week | have been released unhurt.

Internet Ask students to try to find one or more sentences on the internet containing each of the following expressions:
"the man arrested" (meaning 'the man who has been/was arrested')
"cars sold" (meaning 'cars that are/were sold')
"people living in" (meaning 'people who live/lived in')
"planes arriving at" (meaning 'planes which arrive/arrived at')

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possible further activities

Extending Exercise 1 Get students to make up more wrong definitions like those in Exercise 1. Then they exchange their definitions and correct each other's.

Personalisation Get students to complete one or more of the following sentences:
The person I have learnt most from is …
A person I have great respect for is …

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A person I have very little respect for is …

Lie-detecting Get students to complete the following sentence either truthfully or with a lie. The others have to decide whether it is true or not.

I left school/college/university in (date), after which I …

pages 214–215

possible further activities

'Whose': quizzes The following version would suit students with a certain kind of cultural background knowledge. The format can be easily adapted, however, (by you or by the students themselves) to suit classes with other areas of interest.

Students read the questions (using dictionaries where necessary) and choose the right answers (underlined here) from the alternatives given. They will need some help with vocabulary.

Name the following:

A composer whose ninth symphony includes a choir.
Beethoven
Mozart
Tchaikovsky

A country whose 16th president was assassinated.
Russia
South Africa
The United States

A painter whose most famous picture has a mysterious smile.
Rembrandt
Leonardo da Vinci
Andy Warhol

A play whose author also wrote *Hamlet*.
Gone with the Wind
Romeo and Juliet
The Cherry Orchard

A country whose capital is on the River Seine.
Belgium
Japan
France

An animal whose home is in the Arctic.
Polar bear
Giraffe
Llama

A king whose wives had a 50–50 chance of surviving.
Herod the Great
Charlemagne
Henry VIII

A girl whose lover used her shoe to find her.
Cinderella
Red Riding Hood
Helen of Troy

A girl whose grandmother got eaten by a wolf.
Cinderella
Red Riding Hood
Helen of Troy

A queen whose beauty caused a ten-year war.
Cinderella

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Red Riding Hood
Helen of Troy

A Swiss town whose name begins with Z.
Zürich
Zaragoza
Zanzibar

A theory whose originator was Swiss, but emigrated to the US.
Evolution
Relativity
Astrology

Your class might respond better to questions (easily prepared) that begin for example:

A football team whose captain comes from …
A band whose lead singer …
A singer whose biggest hit is …

Students could draw up one or more questions themselves individually or in groups.

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